



March 21, 2014

The Honorable Joseph Haveman  
Michigan House of Representatives  
Appropriations Committee, *Chair*  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Haveman and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT: Senate Bill 648 and 649 Michigan Essential Health Provider Program: Debt Repayment**

On behalf of the Michigan Primary Care Consortium, we are writing to ask for your support of Senate Bills (SB) 648 and 649, introduced by Senators John Moolenaar and Jim Marleau, respectively.

The Consortium's diverse membership consists of health providers, systems, payers, educators, business and industry, and numerous associations (*please see page ten of the attached annual report*). Our mission is to support the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) approach to deliver quality, accessible, and affordable primary care.

SB 648 and 649, which passed unanimously in the Senate on March 12<sup>th</sup>, make much needed policy changes to the Michigan State Loan Repayment Program, including lifting the cap on how long a provider can stay in an underserved area and receive loan forgiveness. Both bills movement, in concert with the proposed funding level included in the Governor's FY 2015 Budget request, is an encouraging development as we seek to address challenges surrounding access to care, specifically in geographic areas with a chronic primary care provider shortage.

In light of our aging population, a growing percentage of primary care providers retiring, as well as expanded insurance coverage under programs like the *Healthy Michigan* (Medicaid expansion) plan, it is estimated 450,000 Michiganders will be seeking cost effective medical care vs. expensive emergency service departments or lack of any care.

It is imperative, especially for Michigan's underserved and rural regions, that we promote a friendly legislative and regulatory environment that fosters primary care growth.

*In addition, this is especially relevant as Michigan strives to market itself to current and potential employers, educated and technically trained employees – that Michigan is the place to be. Health care delivery and accessibility is an important part of this equation.*

We are encouraged by the commitment demonstrated thus far by the legislature and the Governor to support and improve this critical program. On behalf of the Consortium's diverse members, we do hope you will support SB 648 and 649.

Should you consider the legislation in your committee this spring, we would be pleased to be present offering testimony.

Respectfully,

Craig Magnatta, D.O.  
Board Chair

Jeffrey D. Brasie, M.A.  
Executive Director

- Enclosure

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